



Io Woman

A Publication of the Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women • Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, January/February 2007

2007 Priorities

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) has proposed as priority areas to the Governor and General Assembly for 2007 the following:

- State investments in Head Start, Early Head Start and other early childhood programs that emphasize school-readiness. (Child Care)
- An increase in the minimum wage. (Economics)
- Legislative proposals addressing predatory lending, including predatory home mortgage lending, payday loans, tax refund anticipation loans and car title loans. (Economics)
- Amending the Iowa Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. (Equality)
- Focusing on health care reform until health care coverage is accessible and affordable for all Iowans. (Health)
- Increased funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the state budget. (Violence Against Women)

***Women You Know,
Women You Want to Meet
is coming this Spring!***

ICSW Adopts Proposals for Governor and General Assembly

As a state agency, the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) works to eliminate inequities for women by advocating for changes in state laws, by supporting studies in important areas, and by championing gender-specific changes within state government.

To do that, the ICSW annually submits proposals to the Governor and General Assembly. Following are the 2007 Legislative, Administrative, and Study Proposals. During the 2007 Session, the ICSW will support or oppose legislative action that relates to any of the proposals. Please note that proposals are not in order of importance.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Aging Issues and Long-Term Care

In 2006, Iowa ranked fourth in the percentage of population over 85 years of age, fifth in the percentage of

population over 75 years of age, and fifth in the percentage of population over 65 years of age. Additionally in 2005, 59 percent of Iowans over 65 were women. As the baby boom generation gets older, the need for both paid and unpaid caregivers will increase. A 2004 ICSW study on CNA wages and benefits found that 82 percent earn under \$12 per hour with few benefits and high turnover. A typical family caregiver in today's society is an educated, working, married woman in her mid-forties who spends about twenty hours per week providing unpaid care to her mother. To address the needs of aging Iowans, and of paid and unpaid caregivers for dependent adults, the ICSW supports:

1. Amendment of state tax policy in the Code of Iowa Chapter 422.9(2)(e) regarding tax deduction to include spouse, brother, and sister for whom in-home care is given.
2. More standardized education, continuing education, and opportunities for advancement for direct care workers by supporting implementation

ICSW Priorities Lunch & Learn

Join the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women on Friday, January 5 at the ICSW Priorities Lunch and Learn. The free event will begin promptly at 12 noon and end at 1 p.m. Bring your own lunch to Room 116 in the State Capitol and hear more about the ICSW's 2007 Legislative Priorities. The event will include a panel discussion on issues and a question and answer period.

Panel members include Tom Rendon, Iowa Department of Education; Paulee Lipsman, Iowa House of Representatives Democratic Caucus; Victor Elias, Child and Family Policy Center; Alicia Claypool, Iowa Civil Rights Commission; John Hale, Iowa CareGivers Association; and Laurie Schipper, Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Moderating the panel will be Charlotte Nelson, ICSW.

For more information or for special accommodations, please contact the ICSW, 515/281-4461, 800/558-4427, or hdr.icsw@iowa.gov.

of the recommendations of the Direct Care Workers Task Force.

3. Increased funding to the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs for the following:

- Abuse Initiative into additional counties
- Additional state long-term care ombudsmen within the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs.
- Activation of the Office of Substitute Decision Maker within the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs, which was mandated in 2005.
- Home and Community Based Services, and
- Iowa CareGivers Association funding.

Child Care

Seventy-nine percent of married women with children under 18 were in the labor force in 2005. According to the 2004 American Community Survey, Iowa is fourth in the nation to have women in the workforce with children under age six. Child care is an economic and social infrastructure issue that affects the bottom line for business, the standard of living for families, and the future competitiveness of the state. To insure quality affordable child care, in particular for women seeking training and/or employment, the ICSW supports:

1. State investments in Head Start, Early Head Start and other early childhood programs that emphasize school-readiness. (2007 Priority)
2. An increase in funding levels for the Iowa Community Empowerment for quality early childhood programs for zero to five.
3. Requirement that all child care/preschool settings adhere to standards that ensure quality care and experiences.
4. Separate appropriation to Iowa Department of Public Health of at least \$1.2 million for child care nurse consultant program.
5. A child care and/or preschool subsidy for every Iowa family whose income is up to 185% of poverty.

6. A professional development system for child care/preschool workers of prerequisite and on-going training.

7. Increased funding for quality after-school programs from the Healthy Iowans Tobacco Trust Fund to the Department of Education.

Economics

In 2005, 64.6 percent of Iowa women age 16 and older were in the workforce, which represented 47.3 percent of the total workforce. The 2005 American Community Survey found that Iowa women earned 74.8 percent of what Iowa men earn. According to the Iowa wage study released in 2000, 64 percent of female respondents reported annual wages of \$25,000 or less while 66 percent of males reported wages over \$25,000. To address the economic needs of Iowa women, the ICSW supports:

1. An increase in the minimum wage. (2007 Priority)
2. Legislative proposals addressing predatory lending, including predatory home mortgage lending, payday loans, tax refund anticipation loans and car title loans. (2007 Priority)
3. Increased funding of \$186,000 to ICSW, which includes \$24,000 for training on issues of violence against women, \$93,000 for Iowans in Transition grants, and \$69,000 for an Iowa money school program.
4. Development of a plan for extending a comparable worth policy to all public employees in Iowa, with state assistance to local government entities in conducting comparable worth studies and a plan for making state revenue-sharing monies at future dates contingent upon adopting comparable worth pay schedules for local government employees.
5. Development of a plan to achieve pay equity for employees in private industry furthering the goal of eliminating wage discrimination on the basis of gender.
6. Legislation to outlaw the unfair employment practice of discrimination based on a person's use of Family and Medical Leave.

7. Establishing a vehicle for partial wage compensation for a person taking family and medical leave.
8. Instituting an At-Home Infant Care (AHIC) program.
9. Implementation of the recommendations of the Targeted Small Business Task Force.
10. Opposing an amendment to the Iowa Constitution providing for public vote on tax increases.

Equality

The 2006 Status of Iowa Women Report documents the need for continuing to improve the quality of life for women in this state. To achieve equality while improving the status of women, the ICSW recommends:

1. Amending the Iowa Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. (2007 Priority)
2. Enactment of a bill requiring all school districts to adopt anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and anti-bullying policies to protect all students.
3. State funding to provide staff and support for the provision of technical assistance on educational equity for school districts and to monitor implementation of Iowa's multicultural, gender-fair curriculum requirement as well as Title IX.
4. Incentives for males and minorities to enroll in programs for training elementary education teachers and secondary family and consumer science teachers, and for females and minorities to enroll in programs of training for secondary industrial technology, mathematics, and science teachers.
5. Legislation to permit qualified children of undocumented peoples to pay in-state tuition rates to attend public universities and community colleges.
6. Gender balance on boards and commissions of political subdivisions of the state.
7. Adequate funding for the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

Health

Good health is essential to leading a productive and fulfilling life and to participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of the state. It requires safe and healthful physical and social environments, sufficient incomes, safe and adequate housing, proper nutrition, preventive treatment, and education on maintaining healthful behaviors. It is an irony that many health care workers do not earn enough to afford their own health care coverage. To increase the quality of health in women, the ICSW supports:

1. Focusing on health care reform until health care coverage is accessible and affordable for all Iowans. (2007 Priority)
2. \$1 tobacco tax increase.
3. Legislation to allow local control in regulating smoke free environments.
4. Full funding and implementation of the State Children's Health Care Initiative (hawk-i), with consideration of available options including coverage of parents.
5. Full funding for Medicaid per Iowa Department of Human Services request rather than utilizing the supplemental strategy.
6. Increased provider rates for Medicaid services.
7. Increased reimbursement rate under Title XIX for dentists to care for children.
8. Access to mammography, colposcopy, and screening for diabetes for low-income individuals.
9. Continued funding for follow-up treatment when screening for breast and cervical cancer indicates abnormalities.
10. Coverage for screening tests for women who are at risk for ovarian cancer.
11. Increased funding of family planning services through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
12. Access to all reproductive health care options for women as currently available.

13. Increased funding for statewide comprehensive adolescent pregnancy prevention programs.
14. Opposition to any legislative language defining when life begins.
15. Requirements that sexuality education be age-appropriate, science-based and medically accurate.
16. Funding for services for pregnant and parenting teens at the current level.
17. Increased funding to programs for quality substance abuse treatment, including treatment tailored specifically for methamphetamine use.
18. Open access to psychiatric medications that are most effective in treating mental illness.
19. Appropriation to Iowa Department of Public Health for development of a systematic approach of identifying and treating perinatal depression.
20. Increased funding for mental health, mental retardation, developmental disability, and brain injury or change in how the limitation in property taxes is applied.

Insurance

In recognition of the needs of all persons to insure against the risks related to illness, disability, retirement and death, and in particular noting the needs of persons following divorce or disability or death of a spouse, the ICSW supports:

1. Expanding mental health parity to include eating disorders, panic and anxiety disorders, post traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse treatment.
2. Elimination of discriminatory practices on the basis of gender or marital status in the issuance or operation of any type of insurance policy, plan, program, or coverage, including but not limited to rates, payments, or benefits; for example, exclusion of obstetrical care for unwed dependents.
3. Requiring Iowa regulated insurance plans that cover prescriptions and/or vaccines to cover HPV vaccine.
4. Expansion of relationship definition for family coverage health insurance

to include members in the same household.

5. Requirement that the phone number to call and obtain more information about the external review process be printed on insurance cards and be posted in a prominent place in health care facilities, so that a person who has been denied coverage knows how to appeal.
6. Tax credits for long-term care insurance.

Justice

Women in Iowa have unique needs relative to the administration of justice in all areas, including legal assistance. The female prison population in Iowa is on the rise, climbing from fewer than 100 in 1985 to 658 in 2006. The ICSW supports:

1. Keeping Iowa's current human trafficking law intact.
2. Increased state appropriation for the Legal Services Grants Program administered through the Iowa Attorney General.
3. Strengthening and expanding our community based corrections as a way to alleviate the growth of our prison population.
4. Corrections budget funding to provide for adequate staffing commensurate with Iowa's growing offender population for the safety of the public, staff and offenders.
5. Elimination of mandatory minimum sentencing and restoring more discretion in sentencing to the judiciary.
6. Intensive residential community-based facilities for drug offenders on probation.
7. Expansion of substance abuse treatment in prisons and in the community based correction facilities.
8. Re-emphasizing (and supporting with resources) the importance of education in rehabilitation and re-entry programming to reduce recidivism.
9. Continued state funding for the Star Therapeutic Community Program at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women.

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10. Continuation of no-fault dissolution of marriage.
11. Opposition to reinstatement of the death penalty.
12. Changes in the Code of Iowa Chapter 729A.2 to add the words “actual or perceived” to the definition of a hate crime.
13. Expanding the Iowa Court Appointed Special Advocate Program statewide.

Violence Against Women

Since 1995, 104 Iowa women and 16 Iowa men have been killed by their partners. In fiscal year 2005, 21,738 victims of domestic violence were served by programs receiving state dollars. That same year, 4,141 adult, teenage, and child survivors of sexual assault sought services from Iowa’s sexual assault crisis centers. In light of the number and degree of violent incidents committed against women, the ICSW supports:

1. Increased funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the state budget. (2007 Priority)
2. Amending Code of Iowa Chapter 724.26, so that state law is the same as the federal law that prohibits persons who have committed domestic violence or who are subject to a no-contact order from possessing firearms.
3. Amending the Code of Iowa Chapter 562A.36 to ensure that victims of domestic violence can call the police or emergency assistance without facing eviction, and provide a civil penalty for violations of this right.
4. Repeal of or change in Code of Iowa Chapter 708.2A(5)a that limits the time frame for counting previous domestic violence convictions.
5. Establishing affirmative defense for victims of domestic violence to the crime of child endangerment for a) knowingly permitting a child or minor to be present at a location where Methamphetamine is manufactured or a precursor is possessed with an intent to manufacture and b) cohabitating with a person after knowing the person is required to register or is on the sex offender registry.

6. Amending Code of Iowa Chapter 915.20A, so that state law is the same as the federal law that will clarify confidentiality provisions and prohibit the entrance of any personally identifying victim information into a database and instead provide that only aggregate data is input.
7. Amending Code of Iowa Chapter 236.12(1) to allow judges authority “to use all reasonable means to prevent further abuse including but not limited to.”
8. Legislation allowing domestic violence victims to register to vote and keep their address records confidential.
9. Legislation requiring every state department or agency referenced in the annual Domestic Violence Death Review report to respond to the recommendations in writing within sixty days of the issuance of the report.
10. An appropriation for the Iowa Domestic Abuse Death Review Team within the Iowa Department of Public Health budget.
11. Opposition to any legislation to establish a presumption for joint physical care of children.
12. Mandating sexual harassment prevention training of supervisors for private employers with 50 or more employees.

Welfare

In 2006 the Iowa FIP grant could be tripled and a family of three receiving the benefit would still be in poverty according to federal guidelines. To endorse Iowa’s efforts to reform the welfare system, particularly to make services available that promote economic self-sufficiency, the ICSW supports:

1. Increased grant level for the Family Investment Program (FIP).
2. Full funding for child care, education, and training for Family Investment Program (FIP) participants through the maintenance of effort requirement for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

3. Increasing work deductions (earned income disregards) under Family Investment Program (FIP).
4. Investment of work related TANF High Performance Bonus for one-time use to strengthen FIP employment and training programs, including Family Development and Self-Sufficiency.
5. Fully restored funding for the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program.
6. State funded welfare-to-work program with emphasis on post-FIP funding.
7. Continued medical coverage for former welfare recipients beyond the one-year limit to cover the gap between leaving public assistance and becoming totally self-sufficient.
8. Expansion of PROMISE JOBS/ Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services pilot to statewide program in order to better serve persons with disabilities.
9. Increased funding for utilities payments for low-income Iowans.
10. Increased percentage of real estate transfer tax dedicated to the Homeless Shelter Operations Grant (HSOG) from five percent to ten percent.
11. Dedication of 90 percent of revenue from real estate transfer tax to the State Housing Trust Fund.
12. Continued investment in the Transitional Housing Revolving Loan Fund so that it may become self-perpetuating.
13. Continued funding for foster children with the Preparation for Adult Living program (PALs).

STUDY PROPOSALS

The ICSW supports:

1. Study of the economic, fiscal, and social impact of the establishment of a living wage in Iowa.
2. Study of materials to determine whether financial advisors are being encouraged to sell products (e.g. insurance, trusts, annuities) based on gender assumptions such as the

incompetence or unwillingness of women to handle financial affairs.

3. Study of issues related to child custody, including judicial discretion, rulings of Iowa judges, and consideration of primary caregiver presumption.

4. Review of the statute of limitations in prosecution for child sexual abuse.

5. Study by Iowa Department of Public Health of sickle cell anemia, diabetes, infant mortality and keloid treatment in African-Americans.

6. Study of the reasons why women attorneys do not apply, or reapply, in greater numbers for appointment to judgeships.

7. Study of child support issues, including:

- Amendment to Code of Iowa Chapter 633.425 classifying unpaid child support first in payment of debts of an estate;
- Providing legal representation for persons seeking child support.
- Institute child support assurance to aid families unconditionally until the state enforces and collects court-ordered child support.
- Proposal to move child support enforcement and collections to the Department of Revenue.

8. Study to determine the scope and nature of mandatory training in gender-specific services for appropriate staff at all state agencies involved with juvenile justice as well as any youth-serving agencies that receive state funds.

9. Study of the compensation for workers in treatment programs for adolescent females.

10. Study of the unemployment rate of ex-offenders due to felony convictions to determine what effect this unemployment rate has on recidivism.

11. Study of gender issues in pre-trial and trial matters and the need for different approaches based on gender.

PROPOSALS TO EXECUTIVE BRANCH FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

The ICSW supports:

Aging Issues and Long-Term Care

1. Expansion of the Direct Care Worker Registry.
2. A standardized formula within state government for measuring and tracking long-term care staff turnover by worker category.

Economics

1. Promotion of state/federal dependent care pre-tax deductions for in-home day care, in-home nursing care, child day care, adult day care, and household services in conjunction with day care.
2. Promotion of earned income tax credit and child care income tax credit.
3. Promotion of assistance with tax preparation to low-income Iowans.
4. Amending the state plan for implementing the Workforce Investment Act to include a strong initiative for training women for nontraditional, higher-paying jobs.
5. Policies that promote job sharing and flex-time in employment.
6. Partnership with the Iowa Finance Authority in an effort to educate Iowa women on the opportunities available for down payment assistance and low interest rate mortgages.

Education

1. Continuation of affirmative strategies to promote opportunities for women and minority persons in educational administration, which in turn results in role models for students and a vehicle for change in the educational environment.
2. Increased educational support for programs that encourage females and minority students to study mathematics, science, and technology at all levels as well as to pursue careers related to mathematics,

science, and computer technology.

3. Promotion of female participation in educational programs leading to nontraditional, higher-paying jobs.

4. Promotion of financial literacy courses in schools and communities.

5. Infusion of equity training and strategies for effectively working with diverse learners into the college level preparation programs for school administrators, teachers, counselors, and coaches. (To supplement, not replace the current human relations courses.)

6. Encouragement for school districts to use methods and resources already at their disposal to gain equitable treatment for young women and men and to ensure quality educational environments that ensure that all students achieve to their maximum potential.

7. Provision of English as a Second Language adult education.

Health

1. Promotion of prenatal screening to include counseling to high-risk women to have confidential HIV test and treatment if necessary to prevent transmission.

2. A Medicaid waiver, for family planning services up to 24 months after a pregnancy has ended.

3. Continuation of funding for chlamydia screenings.

4. Monitoring the delivery of services through Empowerment Zones, to assure that needs of families are being met.

5. Informing policy makers regarding the prevalence of perinatal depression in Iowa.

6. Monitoring managed care for substance abuse and mental health treatment to insure that specific needs of women, including aftercare, are met.

7. Encouraging the state to apply for a federal waiver to allow state employees access to the hawk-i program.

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8. Education on the illegality of female genital mutilation (AKA female circumcision).
9. Appropriate response from law enforcement to harassment at reproductive health care facilities in Iowa.

Justice

1. Monitoring the implementation of the Iowa Supreme Court's Equality in the Courts Task Force's final recommendations.
2. Continued education of judicial nominating commission members regarding the need to increase the number of women and minorities in the Iowa judiciary, and encouragement of judicial nominating commission members to give weight and consideration to relevant background and experience in the selection of candidates.
3. Improvement of the procedures for enforcement of financial settlements, including alimony and other judicial decisions.
4. Educating judges about the current law and problems created by nonpayment of support.
5. Advocacy by legislators with the Department of Corrections in establishing and changing administrative rules involving the cost of telephone calls, visiting hours, and expanding the definition of family so contact from persons closest to the inmates is enhanced.
6. Removing the ban on access to cable television by offenders in our prisons.
7. The mediation/arbitration approach to child custody except in cases where domestic violence or child abuse are involved.
8. Making services, such as mental health services, to families involved in the juvenile court available immediately.

Violence Against Women

1. Monitoring the implementation of recommendations of the Supreme Court Task Force on Courts' and Communities' Response to Domestic Violence.

Welfare

1. Tightening of accountability and rules regarding Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) distribution.
2. Reestablishing a post-FIP program.

Farm Loans Available

Women and minority farmers interested in buying or operating family-sized farms may be eligible for loans from the Farm Service Agency.

Derryl McLaren, state executive director for the Iowa USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), says "The Farm Service Agency is interested in promoting greater involvement in farming and ranching by women and minorities. Each year, we reserve a portion of our farm loan funds especially for socially disadvantaged applicants."

The loans available to women and minorities are the same as those for other borrowers, as are the eligibility requirements. Applicants must be primarily and directly engaged in farming and ranching on family-size operations.

Contact the local Farm Service Agency county office or USDA Service Center for detailed information about the Socially Disadvantaged Applicant loan program.

Make Tax Time Pay

Make tax time pay for you -- claim the tax benefits you've earned. You may be eligible for the earned income tax credit and child tax credit. You may owe less in taxes and get cash back from the IRS.

If you worked in 2006, had children living with you, and earned less than \$36,000 or did not have children living with you and earned less than about \$12,000, you could qualify.

File a tax return to claim all the tax credits you've earned. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance helps people fill out tax returns for free. For a site near you, call 800/829-1040. You may also learn more about credits from the IRS at 800/829-1040 or www.irs.gov.

Women and Heart Disease

Heart disease is the #1 killer of American women. It kills six times as many women as breast cancer. Yet, many women are unaware of the risk factors of heart disease. In fact, very few women -- only 12% -- ever talk to their doctors about heart disease.

Sue Dawson, MA, RN, CCRP of Mercy Medical Center in Cedar Rapids, presented the above information at the December 5 Iowa Commission on the Status of Women meeting.

Dawson went on to explain that until recently, doctors were not taught about the risks women face in dealing with heart disease. She is studying patterns in symptom presentation and analyzing all gender specific AMI data. However, not all data is available delineated by gender. Dawson is working to recommend that gender specific data be reported in core measures.

To learn more, email Dawson at sdawson@mercy.org.

Calendar of Events

January

- 5 ICSW Priorities Lunch and Learn.** 12 noon - 1 p.m., Room 116, State Capitol, Des Moines. Free and open to the public. ICSW, 800/558-4427, 515/281-4461 or dhr.icsw@iowa.gov.
- 5 Iowa Gender-Specific Services Task Force.** 10 a.m.-12 noon, Urbandale Public Library, Urbandale. Kathy Nesteby, ICSW, 515/281-6915, 800/558-4427, or kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov.
- 5 Iowa Human Needs Advocates.** Meets weekly at 9 a.m. in the State Capitol, Des Moines. Call 515/974-8908 for more information.
- 8 The 2007 session of the 82nd Iowa General Assembly convenes.**
- 12 Inauguration of Governor-Elect Culver and Lt. Governor-Elect Judge.**
- 16 State of the State Address.**
- 15 18th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Ceremony.** 10:45 a.m. to 12 p.m., State Historical Building, Des Moines. Free and open to the public. Kim Cheeks, Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans, 515/281-3274 or kim.cheeks@iowa.gov.
- 16 Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners.** 12 noon. Wesley United Methodist Church, Des Moines. Bring your own lunch. 515/283-1911.
- 19-20 Women in Denim: Celebrating Women of Rural America.** Buena Vista University, Storm Lake. Fee varies. www.womenindenim.com.
- 23 Iowa CareGiver Association Day on the Hill.** 515/241-8697 or information@iowacaregivers.org.
- 24 Unfinished Business: Electing a Woman to Represent Iowa in the US Congress.** 7-9 p.m., Iowa Memorial Union, Iowa City. Women's Resource and Action Center, 319/335-1486, wrac@uiowa.edu, or www.uiowa.edu/~WRAC.
- 26 Write Women Back Into History Essay Contest postmark deadline.**
- 26-27 Overall Women: A Conference for Today's Rural Woman.** Marriott Hotel, Coralville. Fee varies. 515/294-6222, ucs-info@iastate.edu or www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/overallwomen/home.html.
- 27 Emma Goldman Clinic Annual Choice Dinner.** 6 - 9 p.m., Iowa Memorial Union, University of Iowa, Iowa City. Speaker: Amy Johnson. For tickets or more information, call Toni-Ann at 319/337-2111 or ec_egc@yahoo.com.

- 27 I'll Make Me A World in Iowa Celebration Day.** 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Polk County Convention Center, Des Moines. Free. For more information, call 515/822-7171 or visit www.worldiniowa.com/celebration_day.htm.

February

African American History Month

- 2 Iowa Gender-Specific Services Task Force.** 10 a.m.-12 noon, Urbandale Public Library, Urbandale. Kathy Nesteby, ICSW, 515/281-6915, 800/558-4427, or kathy.nesteby@iowa.gov.
- 5 13th anniversary of Family and Medical Leave Act.**
- 6 Iowa Commission on the Status of Women Meeting.** 10:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. Location TBA, Des Moines. Free and open to the public. Call or write for special accommodations, 800/558-4427, 515/281-4461 or dhr.icsw@iowa.gov.
- 13-14 Iowa Culture and Language Conference.** Polk County Convention Center, Des Moines. Fee varies. For more information, go to www.iowa.gov/educate/diverse-learners/our-kids.html.
- 22 Governor's Conference on LGBT Youth.** Olmsted Center, Drake University, Des Moines. Fee varies. For more information, contact Brad Clark at 515/243-1221 or brad.clark@iowasafeschools.org.
- 28 Reception to Honor Women Legislators.** 7:30 - 9 a.m., State Capitol, Des Moines. Free and open to the public. Sponsored in part by Iowa Commission on the Status of Women. Chrysalis Foundation. 515/255-1853 or www.chrysalisfdn.org.

History Like No Other

Fort Des Moines Museum and Educational Center
Speaker Series

February 15 – Professor Kesho Scott, Ph.D.
March 15 – Professor Penelope Blake, Ph.D.
April 19 – Professor Hal Chase, Ph.D.
May 17 – Professor Janet L. Sims-Wood, Ph.D.

The speakers will address various aspects of Fort Des Moines, blacks and women in the military, and life in Iowa. All sessions will take place at 6:30 p.m. at the Fort Des Moines Museum and Educational Center in Des Moines.

Each event is \$10, which includes a museum tour, book signing and reception. If you plan to attend all four, the cost is \$30. For additional information, contact the Fort Des Moines Museum at 515/282-8060 or 888/828-3678.

Bits and Pieces

The ICSW extends a thank you to interns **Amy Kotwani** and **Adrienne Dietz**, who worked during the fall. Kotwani is a second-year law student at Drake University and worked primarily on legislative papers and the Small Business publication. Dietz is a graduate of University of Northern Iowa and worked on the *Status of Iowa Women Report*. Look in the next edition for news of the publications' releases.

The ICSW was saddened to learn of the death of Iowa Women's Hall of Fame member **Merle Wilna Fleming**. Fleming, a longtime civil rights advocate, was inducted in 1990. She passed away on November 26, 2006.

The **Write Women Back Into History Essay Contest** guidelines have been e-mailed to several middle school teachers. Ask your school to get involved!

Guidelines can be found at www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/sw/wom_history/index.html. Deadline is January 26, 2007.

Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women has a new website! There you will find information about Friends and upcoming events. Bookmark and visit the site often: www.friendsoficsw.org/index.html.

Are you interested in serving on a **state board or commission**? Governor-elect Culver and Lt. Governor-elect Judge are looking for interested individuals willing to serve the state in this capacity. Visit www.govelect.iowa.gov/administration/boards to learn more.

The National Conference of State Legislatures reports that 23.2 percent of 2007 **state legislators are female**, the

highest such ratio in history. In Iowa, there are 34 women, 28 in the House and 6 in the Senate, the highest number ever.

Women-owned firms continue to grow at twice the rate of all firms, according to the biennial update by the Center for Women's Business Research. As of 2006, the Center estimates there are 7.7 million majority women-owned firms (firms at least 51% owned by a woman or women). Between 1997 and 2006 the number of majority women-owned firms increased from 5.4 to 7.7 million, an increase of 42%, almost double that of all firms (23%). The new projections also show that there are 10.4 million businesses 50% or more owned by a woman or women that employ 13 million employees and generate nearly \$2 trillion (\$1.9 trillion) in revenues.

Help save printing/postage costs!
If you no longer wish to receive
this newsletter, please write or
call the ICSW office. You may also
send your e-mail address. Thank you!

**Friends of the Iowa Commission
on the Status of Women**
Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
Telephone: 515/281-4461 or 800/558-4427
Fax: 515/242-6119
E-mail address: dhr.icsw@iowa.gov
Website: www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw
www.friendsoficsw.org

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Enclosure of items in the newsletter does not necessarily connote endorsement by the Friends of the ICSW. All information must be mailed or faxed to the ICSW no later than the 15th day of all even numbered months. The use of any submitted material is at the discretion of the editor. The *IoWoman* is mailed six times per year to 8,400 persons or organizations.

Camille Curley, President

Charlotte Nelson, ICSW Executive Director

Lori M. Schrader-Bachar, Editor

IoWoman

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